



Newsletter

CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS, SERVANTS OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

At the Heart of Redeeming Love: Love Creating Wholeness



Sister Liz Sweeney, SSJ
 Saturday, April 10 via Zoom
 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and
 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
 Sunday, April 11 via Zoom
 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

The sacred task of human persons in an ensouled Universe is to nourish a healing love for the ‘other’ in ourselves and in every other, in all its many manifestations. To be the love that restores wholeness is to entrain ourselves as a collective body to the vision of a more radical communion, Christ Omega, that is already here and yet is still groaning to be born.

Register by April 8: communications@sistersofihm.org

Advisory Board Summary

The Executive Session of the Advisory Board meeting, March 13, 2021, began with a prayer prepared by Sister Nancy DeCesare. She used the poem “It Takes Courage” by Shelly Francis.

The leadership team then shared their working document, “Congregation Priorities June 2020-June 2022,” with the Advisory Board. The priorities cited in the document are rooted in our IHM Chapter Direction Statement 2018-2022 and the issues identified previously by the Advisory Board as critical to the life of the congregation: sponsorship, relationships, vital living, and the environment. From this working document, the team suggested three areas of future focus with which the advisory board might assist:

- Ensure sustainability of our IHM Charism and Mission in our sponsored works
- Deepen collaborative relationships with our five sister congregations: IHM Monroe, IHM Immaculata, OSP, SSC, and SSCM
- Explore emerging options for future membership

The Advisory Board then broke into small groups to discuss the suggested areas of focus and to determine how the Advisory Board might help advance these objectives.

Sister Terri Jordan presented the Advisory Board with a description of the newly formed IHM Finance and Investment Committee. She noted that this committee will be more functional with planning for and use of our IHM resources.

Sister Jane Snyder, of the Governance Committee, presented an updated draft of the “Mental Health and Wellness Policy.” She noted that the

Virtual IHMs and OSPs join in celebrating the 175th anniversary of the IHM Founding.

Save the Date

July 9 - July 10, 2021 Gathering Sessions
 July 11, 2021 Liturgical Celebration

Rescheduled from July 2020, our totally virtual gathering will include prayer, conversation, and sessions with contributing scholar Jeannine Hill Fletcher, Th.D.

Look for registration information from NIX, the host of our virtual platform venue.

language emphasizes a new approach to mental health based on a philosophy of wholeness and wellness.

In planning for Assembly 2021, July 23-24, Sister Lisa Perkowski offered to serve as chairperson and Sisters Fran Fasolka and Mary Reap agreed to serve on the planning committee. Other sisters may volunteer to serve on the planning committee for the virtual gathering for Assembly by contacting Sister Lisa Perkowski.

The leadership team announced that the IHM congregational jubilee celebration will be held August 15 for the Jubilarians of both 2020 and 2021.

It is hoped that an in-person celebration will be able to be held. The Jubilarians were notified recently with a letter from the leadership team.

The Advisory Board then floated some ideas for the agenda for our upcoming Assembly.

The IHM 175th Anniversary gathering will be held virtually July 9-11 in Monroe. Details will follow soon.

Sister Maryalice noted that at the last meeting of the Advisory Board on March 8, a decision was made to disband the Advisory Board's subgroups related to the critical issues. While the board still believes that sponsorship, relationships, vital living, and the environment are critical issues, they feel they are being addressed in other ways. She also noted that a definition of the term shared leadership is being drafted by members of the Advisory Board.

Sister Lisa reported that she had no meeting notes to share with the Advisory Board since none have been submitted to her since fall 2020.

Sister Mary Persico updated the Advisory Board on interactions with the prayer circle members at the IHM Center and OLP. Due to Covid restrictions, Sister Mary has been unable to personally visit these sisters but on behalf of the Advisory Board she wrote a letter to the sisters indicating that they are in our prayers and that we are open to hearing from them regarding any issues or concerns they may have.

The Advisory Board then considered the rotation plan for elected advisory board members. Sister Maryalice remarked that at the end of 2021, five Advisory Board members will complete their three-year term and five members will be elected and begin their terms at the first meeting in January 2022. The Election Committee will devise a process for this election.

The advisory board discussed how it could connect to and support the work of the Chapter Coordinating Committee. Sister Kathleen Lunsman will serve as the liaison between the Advisory Board and the Chapter Coordinating Committee and will share the

Advisory Board's ideas with the Chapter Coordinating Committee.

In the afternoon open meeting, Sister Maryalice summarized the topics of the morning meeting of the Advisory Board for the sisters who joined the meeting. She noted that 48 sisters completed the survey asking if they wanted a virtual or in-person Assembly. About half indicated they preferred in-person, but many indicated that they knew this might not be likely to happen. The Assembly Planning Committee requested that a decision be made now so that they could begin their planning. Because we have no certainty that it will be safe to gather in person by July, the Advisory Board made the decision to hold the Assembly virtually. They also noted the strong desire among the congregation members to gather as soon as it is safe and to make that gathering a meaningful celebration of all that we have experienced together during these months of separation. She affirmed that responses related to "what is important" are valuable and helpful in the planning for Assembly and that there was a positive response to the idea of holding small in-person gatherings prior to Assembly. The planning committee will take all these suggestions under advisement.

Sister Mary Ellen Higgins asked sisters to consider volunteering to form a small group to plan monthly virtual remembrance prayers for the sisters who have died. Due to Covid restrictions, sisters were unable to attend the traditional vesper remembrance services and funeral masses. Sisters interested in helping to plan these remembrance prayers are asked to contact Sister Kate McCarron: mccarronk@sistersofihm.org or 570-330-8667.

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During the afternoon open meeting, sisters of Shalom Community offered a proposal regarding the emotional wellness of sisters. The proposal suggests that:

- The congregation provide practical education on how to access the services of mental health professionals and empower sisters to do so.
- The congregation encourage sisters to participate in educational programs on mental/emotional wellness to destigmatize and normalize the use of professional services related to mental health.

Following this discussion, a resolution was affirmed that the Advisory Board would work to facilitate the creation of an ad hoc committee to address education for IHM Sisters in the areas of mental health and wellness.

Since no other issues were presented, the meeting adjourned at 2:05 pm.



A Presentation by IHM Associate, Dr. Susan Turell

by Sister John Michele Southwick, IHM

If you like questions, then the place to be was listening to Dr. Susan Turell on Saturday, March 20. "Do I live within or outside the gender binary?" Well, there is a question I haven't thought much about, but when I did, I learned quite a bit! First, I had to think about what the question even meant.

Actually, that was only a part of the question we were asked to think about before the presentation. Below is the whole reflection we were asked to consider:

"Take a moment to reflect on your gender identity and your sexual orientation. How much do you personally live within or outside the gender binary? In what ways do you conform and/or challenge it with your physical presentation, your personality and/or behavioral characteristics?"

Yes, there were a lot of questions to think about, but Dr. Turell, a faculty member in the Psychology/Counseling Department at Marywood University, and an IHM Associate, gave us much to think about. She provided information about gender identities and the gender binary. I used to think that male and female was pretty much it. I never realized how much the gender binary of male and female had to do with the power dynamic of LGBTQ+ oppression. Susan shared a graphic called the Circle of Power and Privilege. It helped me to understand privilege and systems of power that keep peoples marginalized and oppressed. She used many examples to show how this was the case.

After her presentation she opened up for questions and comments and then broke us into small groups to discuss the following questions:

1. Did any of the ideas presented in the video upset you? What might be upsetting about them? Are there any areas of your privilege, if you are cisgender or heterosexual, that they might challenge?
2. How do the practices of our communities and the larger institution of religion value (privilege) maleness over femaleness?
3. How does silence about sexual orientation and gender identity maintain inequity; that is, the valuing of maleness (therefore, heterosexuality and cis-genderism) over homosexuality and gender non-conformity?

These are wonderful questions that produced some lively discussion. Although you can't see the small

**Moment
of
Solidarity**

**ALLIES
CARING
SUPPORT
JUSTICE**

**Wednesday, April 7
12:00 noon**

**Marywood University
Memorial Garden - Learning Commons**

Allies of Asian American Pacific Islanders

groups on the video, you can see and hear the feedback in the large group sharing. If you were not able to attend Susan's presentation on March 20, you can watch it here: <https://video.ibm.com/recorded/129591554>

I would recommend our sisters and associates watch and begin discussion within Mission Circles, Dialogue Groups and local communities.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Susan left us with the following question: "If you are cisgender and/or heterosexual, what might be your first step(s) as a Scranton IHM/Associate ally for people in the community who are gender non-conforming, either within their sexual orientation, their gender identity, or both?"

Our times are changing and challenge us to create loving, respectful relationships and to honor the many ways that people live and love. As was prayed in the opening prayer, "While many of us may be accustomed to categorizing people as male and female, heterosexual or homosexual, binary thinking fails to reflect the full diversity of human experience and richness of creation."

Celebrating Catholic Sisters Week

Sister Kathy Kurdziel, IHM, Delegate for Religious in the Diocese of Scranton, authored an article for National Catholic Sisters Week in the Catholic Light, in the March 11, 2021, issue. In part Sister Kathy wrote, "Whole communities of consecrated women religious have blessed the Diocese of Scranton. In fact, the sisters were here before Scranton became a diocese. These dedicated sisters arrived with a mission to serve the needs of the people of northeastern Pennsylvania and change their world for the better. They are celebrating Catholic Sisters Week, March 8-14, 2021. For the sisters, it is a time to articulate their charism (their unique spirit), to reach out to new people and to remind the people of our community that they love them and still serve them in any way they can. Sisters invite people to be in touch with them and to reach out in service to others to pay back and to pay forward.

Read the entire article at: <https://www.dioceseof-scranton.org/media/the-catholic-light/the-catholic-light-2021/>



African Sisters Education Collaborative (ASEC) operates programs in ten African countries. Pictured, left to right, Rosemary Shaver, Senior Program Manager; Sister Kathy Kurdziel, IHM, Delegate for Religious; and Sister Draru Mary Cecilia, LSMIG, ASEC Executive Director, discuss components of the ASEC programs including higher education, leadership, scholarship and service learning.

IHM Chapter 2022 Chapter Coordinating Committee Updates and Information

Our first Chapter Chat will take place on Wednesday, April 21, 2021! We are very excited for this conversational experience focusing on the importance of living vitally. There will be two sessions on that day: 1:30-3:30 p.m. and 6:00-8:00 p.m. We will be providing interpreters for those who need this service. You will be asked to sign up for the Zoom event. Our Chapter facilitator, Sister Pat Kozak, CSJ, will be attending. She is looking forward to seeing everyone!

Anyone who hopes to be a delegate to the Chapter is encouraged to attend this and future chats. The events will be live streamed for those who live at the IHM Center and Our Lady of Peace.

The second chapter chat will take place on Tuesday, June 22, 2021. There will also be Chapter Chats in September and November.

We welcome our IHM Associates to our pre-Chapter meetings and Chapter 2022! We hope many of you will also attend the Chapter Chats. In the future we will be sharing the ways that our Associates can participate in the Chapter.

May this quote from the vital living Conversation Starter brochure inspire you: "Wellness is more than health. It is living fully (and vitally). We believe wellness is conscious and inclusive, self-directed and evolving, holistic and multidimensional, positive and affirming."

See you at the Chapter Chat!

IHM is First Community Life Coordinator for SSCs

Sister Lenore Thomas has been hired as the first Community Life Coordinator for the Sisters of St. Casimir at Franciscan Village in Lemont, IL. Lenore applied for this position and completed the interview process in early March. She will begin her new role at the end of May.



Journey with us as we explore the sacred treasures of the
IHM Archives

St. Michael's School for Boys, Hoban Heights PA

At the age of seven or eight, Joe arrived at St. Michael's School for Boys, Hoban Heights PA (his fourth home in seven years) and remained there until he graduated from high school. Many years later, writing as an octogenarian, his story is revealed in his letters to the Archives (quoted with his permission).

"How could I ever forget Sister M. Estelle who drilled the math fundamentals into my being? Sister M. Donelda with long suffering patience coping with 30 eighth graders in full puberty who taught us to be analytical thinkers and master the art of diagraming each sentence to include use of the subjunctive mode. When we moved over to Sister M. Finbarr for 9th grade we were prepared to manage the palette of a straight academic course of study for the next four years. Our 'home room' teacher for grades 11 and 12 Sister M. Emmanuel Carey reinforced the timbers of learning given by her predecessors and made us fit products to enter the workforce and adulthood. There were 14 nuns at that station. Three were in supporting roles. Sister M. Laura was in today's terms the Executive Assistant to the Director with additional duties as Post Mistress for Hoban Heights. Dearest Sister M. Evelina was the youngest of the band and she oversaw meals for 300 three times each day. She understood boys and was unflappable.... After eight years under their tutelage I never once heard a Sister have a cross word about her colleagues. Some of the lessons conveyed to me by example and osmosis were patience, tact, consideration for others, teamwork and core religious values.... After I graduated and moved on into early manhood these ingrained values guided my lifestyle choices. Without doubt, the behavior of the nuns who personified the essence of their vows by word and deed replaced the role of the parents I never knew. Collectively they did a permanent job of instilling their values on me. These served me well in my roles as soldier, corporate executive and leader of a large volunteer group."

From 1948 to 1970, St. Michael's 400 acres of a working dairy farm boasted of 4000 chickens, 170 cattle, 250 hogs and 120 sheep. This as well as all educational components, spiritual guidance, a full working bakery and commercial kitchen were tended by 1 priest, 12 sisters and several lay peoples—meeting the 'needs of orphaned boys.' (St. Michael's Newsletter Winter/Spring 2005).

With gratitude and pride we salute our IHMs who served at St. Michael's from 1916 to 1975 as teachers, mothers, disciplinarians, confidantes, spiritual advisors. Lest we ever feel that our work is without value or that we may not have touched the lives of others, remember this story of Joe Francis. No work is too big or too small to influence the life of another.

Thanks also to Joe for sharing his life story with us!





Beautifying Saint Catherine's Cemetery

Good morning, Sisters. I have been laid up and have been in touch with Sister Ann Monica Bubser, Sister Patt Walsh, and Sister Annellen Kelly. I didn't know if I was going to be able to get the flowers to St. Catherine's Cemetery for Easter and it had me really upset. But my daughter Colleen took me yesterday and I was able to put the flowers at the cemetery. God bless all of you, and have a very blessed Easter.

Prayerfully yours, *Kenny Noll*

2021 Jubilarian Photos Needed

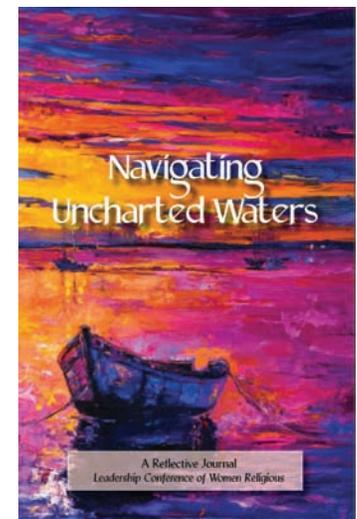
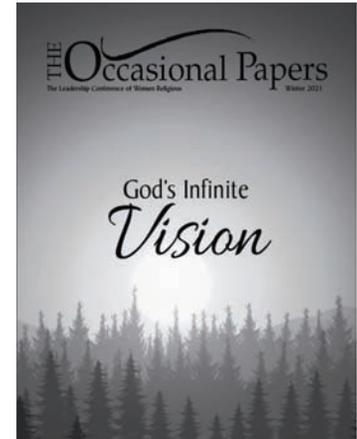
Sisters, I need photos for each 2021 IHM Jubilarian. Please send old photos, ministry photos, current photos of yourself by April 18. Send printed photos to the IHM Communications, IHM Center, 2300 Adams Avenue, Scranton, PA 18509 (photos will be returned) or digital photos (high resolution) to communications@sistersofihm.org

Two LCWR Publications Available

The Winter 2021 edition of *Occasional Papers* entitled, *God's Infinite Vision*, explores how we might look upon this time of upheaval in almost every aspect of society as a moment for transformation. How might we view life from perspectives that penetrate beyond and below surfaces, horizons, and limitations? What do we need to see with greater clarity that will help us be instruments of the change that the world needs for its very survival?

Highlights of this issue are an interview with theologian Douglas Christie, author of *The Blue Sapphire of the Mind: Notes for a Contemplative Ecology*, as well as an interview with theologian Barbara Holmes, author of *Joy Unspeakable: Contemplative Practices of the Black Church*. Orders may be placed at: <https://lcwr.org/item/occasional-papers-occasional-papers-occasional-papers/winter-2021>. Cost: \$5.00

The 2021 LCWR reflection book, *Navigating Uncharted Waters*, draws on the metaphor of sea navigation for living in the world today when so little in life is clear, simple, or risk-free. These 39 reflections look at how to traverse life's complex choices and decisions. The reflections are accompanied by artwork by women religious, including Donna Korba and Lisa Perkowski, and by questions for the reader's consideration. Orders may be placed at: <https://lcwr.org/item/reflection-books/2021>. Cost: \$6.00.



Sister Ann Monica Bubser as a novice with her family

April 14 Evening of Prayer at 6:30 p.m.

Please join us via zoom on Wednesday, April 14 at 6:30 PM. We will join with so many others using the International theme for Earth Day: "The Sacred Act of Restoring Earth." View at: <http://video.ibm.com/channel/ihm-tv>

IHM Forward Gathering Held March 6

Thirty-eight Sisters from the IHM Forward group met via Zoom on Saturday morning, March 6. The theme for our gathering was “IHM Forward: Our Role in the Emerging Future of the IHM Congregation.” The morning was focused around short reflections offered by the five youngest members of the group: Liz McGill, Lisa Perkowski, Rachel Terry, Elvia Mata Ortega, and Norma Poma Arpi. In their presentations, these Sisters were asked to share their responses to the questions:

Why did you enter?

Why do you stay?

What do you need moving forward to sustain and nurture your IHM vocation?

What do you think we (IHM Forward) need to do or consider as we move into the future?

Some of the responses to the question “What do you need to sustain and nurture your IHM vocation?” were:

- I need to be in a space with other IHMs where I am both held and free... and where trust, respect, and honesty continue to evolve
- I need to feel that I belong to others and that others belong to me... and for this, I need to take the necessary steps that bring me closer to this belonging
- I need to live in community with others that give me strength to persevere in my vocation
- I need to seek sisters that are willing to be a bridge from the past into the future... who are willing to share their wisdom with me as we vision the future together
- I need to create the environment for the affective and emotional closeness of belonging to my community
- I need to feel that my relationship with Jesus will never be broken, because without it my life would not make sense



Responses to the question “What do we need to consider as we move into the future?” included:

- We need to consider what are our hopes and dreams for the Church, and in what ways do we understand the sacraments, especially Eucharist
- We need to help one another where we are in mission and in the new challenges that reality presents to us
- We need to engage in an internal process of conversion and transformation... we need to give time and space for God to be God for us.

After listening intently to the five presentations, participants were given personal reflection time and engaged in small group sharing around what they had heard. The morning concluded with a large group sharing led by our facilitator Sister Mary Catherine Redmond, PBVM. Mary Catherine asked the question: “Motivated by our conversation today, what is our role in the IHM Emerging Future and how do we move forward?”

A sampling of responses included:

- We have a role in telling the story of who we are as women religious for IHM and for the sake of our Church – our call to mission.
- We move forward by commitment to our conversations and our storytelling.
- We have a hunger to be together as well as a desire for authenticity and honesty.
- We move forward by deepening our relationships; by being community for one another

As we concluded our time together listening to the song "Glorious," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nomxXk6Q1rk> the group agreed that we were energized by our time together and look forward eagerly to another gathering in the fall on Saturday, October 30.

342 Pairs of New Socks for SJC

Saint Joseph's Center Baby and Children's Pantry was the recipient of 342 pairs of new socks donated by IHM Sisters, associates, employees and friends as a result of the Joy of Sox drive for National Catholic Sisters Week. The socks, size infant to youth shoe size three are a great addition to the pantry as socks are a much needed item for infants and children. The total number of socks collected for the drive was 1500 pairs. Gathered to show appreciation for the large donation are L-R: Sister Maryalice Jacquinet, President/CEO of Saint Joseph's Center; Sister Lenore Thomas, Pastoral Care Coordinator, SJC; Sister Mindy Welding, Director of Vocations for IHM Congregation and coordinator of sox drive; Sister Mary Ann Lang, Administrative Assistant for Publications, SJC and Mary Griffin, Outreach Coordinator, SJC.

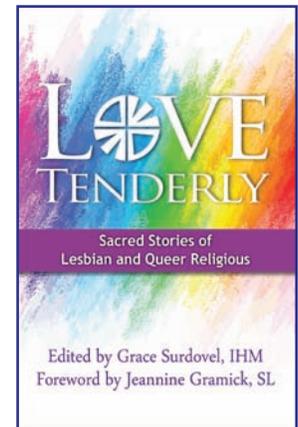


IHM Sisters' Book Discussion Group Forming

IHM sisters are invited to join a book discussion group via Zoom. The book to be read and discussed is, *Love Tenderly*, edited by Sister Grace Surdovel, IHM. The book is available for purchase at: www.newwaysministry.org and also on Amazon at: <https://tinyurl.com/3tpvtzne> or search on Amazon "Love Tenderly"

Sisters wishing to join the group are asked to contact Sister John Michele Southwick by April 12: southwick@marywood.edu

About the book, Love Tenderly: I'm blown away by the courage of all the contributors. Writing is always an act of trust as the writer puts her words out in public, but to tell one's truth with the honesty of these Sisters is beyond courageous. I'm grateful they were able to integrate their truth, face their fear, and share it with all of us. Such amazing and needed work. Thank you again!
– Sister Chris Koellhoffer, IHM



Marywood Conducts Racial Healing Circles *by Rachel Terry, IHM*

This spring Marywood University's Office of Equity and Inclusion in collaboration with Campus Ministry hosted Student Racial Healing Circles. Facilitating the circles were Sisters Rachel Terry and John Michele Southwick and Dr. Yerodin Lucas. The circles are small groups that come together once per week to listen, learn, and discuss what can be done as individuals and groups to heal the campus, local community, and ultimately the country around the issue of systemic racism.

The students who participated were passionate and engaged. They said of the circles:

- An excellent safe space to learn from other individuals and talk about difficult/heavy topics that aren't usually acceptable or comfortable to discuss otherwise.
 - I really looked forward to every Wednesday evening.
 - I feel like I have a lot to learn and am in the early stages of educating myself.
 - Insightful both about learning more on the internal personal work to do as well as the larger world and how it relates to racism.
 - I felt safe speaking my mind during each conversation and knew everything I said wouldn't leave the room.
- Let's keep these committed students in our prayers as we all journey together toward racial healing!

Initial Formation Update *by Mary Elaine Anderson, IHM*

The second year of the novitiate is a time to explore meaningful experiences in community and ministry as well as an opportunity to integrate prayer, community life, ministry, study and leisure. As a novice, Sister Elizabeth “Liz” McGill has been engaging in a diversity of experiences that will help her discern her future as a woman religious and, in particular, as an IHM sister.

Since March 1, Liz has been volunteering at Marywood University. She currently is working on Government Advocacy and also training in the area of Compliance. Liz, who received her B.A. in Social Sciences and her Ph.D. in Human Development with a specialization in Higher Education Administration from Marywood, enjoys being back at the university and participating in areas that broaden her understanding of higher education and stretch her professionally.

Liz feels attracted to not only higher education but also IHM sponsorship. Her concern for the vision and the future mission of our IHM sponsored ministries impelled Liz to contact the Leadership Conference of Women Religious with the hope that she might find information on how other congregations were managing their sponsored works. Liz soon found herself involved in a research project.

Sister Annmarie Sanders, IHM, who is the Director of Communications for LCWR, explains the nature of the project. She writes: “Liz is conducting a study in collaboration with the Leadership Conference of Women Religious that looks at how institutes of US women religious are working with ministries they sponsor as religious life goes through a period of transformation. Her study explores ways in which institutes are assuring that their mission and values undergird ministries they currently sponsor so the ministries can grow and flourish in the future. Upon the study’s completion, the findings will be available to all LCWR members.”

As a novice, Liz leads a busy life. She recently moved from the formation house and is integrating herself into the rhythm of living with the sisters at Spirit of Hope Convent on Dimmick Avenue. Liz continues to participate in the Inter-Community Formation Program. On March 20, she attended the virtual workshop titled Interculturality: Culture, Communication and Perception of Power that was presented by Dr. Arturo Chavez, the Associate Vice President for Mission & Ministry and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion at the University of the Incarnate Word. On March 25, Liz also completed the second semester of InSearch, an Inter-Novitiate Program, that focused on topics of human development within religious life.

Liz approaches her life with an eye on wholistic health. As well as focusing on ministry and community, she prioritizes prayer and her spiritual development, makes time to connect with others and enjoys skiing, golfing and cross fitting! As a second-year novice, she takes seriously our IHM core value of wholeness.



Zoom meeting with Sisters Liz McGill, Carol Zinn, SSJ, (Executive Director of LCWR) and Annmarie Sanders, IHM (LCWR Director of Communications)

Mental Health and Wellness Policy

Sisters, attached to this Newsletter is an updated and revised copy of the IHM Congregation Policy on Mental Health and Wellness. This policy can also be found on the sisters' website under Governance Committee.

IHM Vitae

as of April 1, 2021

Final Profession - 280
Temp. Professed - 2
Novices - 1
Candidates - 0
Associates - 164

IHM Sponsorship Document Updated

The IHM Sponsorship Committee has updated the congregation document on sponsorship. It can be found on the sisters' only part of the website at:

<https://tinyurl.com/3k3th8j4>

Our Lady of Grace Spiritual Center

Manhasset, NY
516-627-9255
www.olgretreat.com

A Space for Grace - Tuesdays, via Zoom 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. with Sister Ann Barbara DeSiano. During our time together each week we will practice Lectio Divina. Free Will Donation. Join whenever you can!

Days of Sabbath: for those seeking personal prayer and silence.
April 2, May 7, June 4, July 2
9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Free Will Donation

Thursday, April 8
New Beginnings
10:30 a.m. - noon via ZOOM
with Joan McGovern
When God wants to do something new...
Free Will Donation

Thursday, April 15
Seasons of Life: Spring
9:30 a.m. - noon
with Sister Ann Barbara, IHM
Join us as we gather to reflect on and celebrate the season of Spring.
\$25

Saturday, April 17
Celebrating New Life this Easter Season. 9:30 a.m. - noon with Sister Ann Barbara, IHM. Join us

to reflect on the gifts this Easter offers us. \$20

Thursday, April 22
A Call to Holiness
10:30 a.m. - noon via ZOOM
with Joan McGovern
Listen to God's gentle whisper and experience the serenity of surrendering to His plan for you.
Free Will Donation

Our Lady of Grace Spiritual Center is open following NY and CDC COVID-19 guidelines. Please visit www.olgretreat.com

Divine Mercy Prayer & Healing
Sunday @ 3:00 p.m.
ZOOM #779 271 5713
Password: Sunday (capital S)

From the IHM Vocation Office

Four successful retreats with Bucknell University, Chestnut Hill College, Marywood University and the Pittsburgh Religious Vocation Council have rounded out the winter scene and now Spring has arrived with newness!

National Catholic Sisters Week was celebrated by collecting socks for The Joy of Sox®. Over 1500 pairs of socks were collected and distributed to the following agencies: Friends of the Poor, Keystone Mission, McCauley Center, NEPA Youth Shelter, St. Francis Soup Kitchen, St. Joseph Center and Baby Pantry, and the Women's Resource Center. The outpouring of donated socks was fantastic and the monetary donations of \$700.00 has been sent to The Joy of Sox®, Mr. and Mrs. Tom Costello, CEO. Thank you sisters, associates, friends, Marywood University Service and Community Outreach, and our beloved employees of OLP and the IHM Center. What a successful week. With a grateful heart, each place sends their utmost gratitude to you for this small act of love and kindness.



L-R: Sisters Betty Bullen, Mary Elaine Anderson, Joan McCusker, Mindy Welding, and Kieran Williams

NRVC Board selects new chair, vice chairs, and four new board members

At its March meeting, the NRVC board appointed a new chair and vice chairs, effective immediately, and selected four new members who will begin serving in the fall. The new executive committee now consists of Sister Mindy Welding, IHM, chair; and vice chairs Father Adam MacDonald, S.V.D. and Sister Belinda Monahan, O.S.B., and Sister Deborah Borneman, SS.C.M., ex officio. The new board members to begin serving in the fall are Ms. Nancy Costello, a former Region 3 NRVC coordinator who works in communications and vocations for the Cabrini Sisters; Sister Nicole Trahan, F.M.I., who has published vocation related articles in HORIZON and elsewhere; Sister Cheryl Wint, O.S.F., of the Hudson Valley Member Area, and Sister Mary Yun, O.P., former coordinator of the West Coast Member Area. Congratulations to all, and warm thanks to Sister Kristin Matthes, S.N.D.deN., who has completed her service as board chair.



The month of April invites us to celebrate Earth Day with this year's theme of "Restore Our Earth."

EARTHDAY.ORG notes that Restore Our Earth "focuses on natural processes, emerging green technologies, and innovative thinking that can restore the world's ecosystems...It is up to each and every one of us to Restore Our Earth not just because we care about the natural world, but because we live on it. We all need a healthy Earth to support our jobs, livelihoods, health and survival, and happiness. A healthy planet is not an option — it is a necessity."

EARTHDAY.ORG recognizes that planting billions of trees across the world is one of the biggest and cheapest ways to take CO2 out of the atmosphere to tackle climate crisis. Our EarthCARE committee already committed to the planting of 175 native trees as a way to celebrate our rich legacy as IHM sisters, associates, and friends. Back in November, we held an outdoor ritual of blessing the trees that were planted or soon to be planted in our Welcoming Space at the IHM Center. We called on our sisters and brothers of the leaf and branch and bud families to share their green hearts with us and to root us in God.

A simple way to honor our tree neighbors on Earth Day is to engage in some version of the Japanese practice of Shinrin Yoku, or forest bathing. Shinrin Yoku involves taking in the forest atmosphere during a leisurely walk. It is a therapy developed in Japan during the 1980s and has become a cornerstone of preventive health care and healing. Studies have shown that spending time among the trees positively creates calming neuro-psychological effects through changes in the nervous system, reducing the stress hormone cortisol and boosting the immune system. This can lead to reduction in stress, anger, anxiety, depression and sleeplessness. In fact, after just 15 minutes of forest bathing, blood pressure drops, stress levels are reduced and concentration and mental clarity improve. Vital Living, anyone?

If you're able to practice Shinrin Yoku, try following these simple steps, recommended by Grow Wild, <https://www.growwilduk.com/blog/5-simple-steps-practising-shinrin-yoku-forest-bathing> :

Step 1 – leave behind your phone, camera or any other distractions, so that you can be fully present in the experience.

Step 2 – Leave behind your goals and expectations. Wander aimlessly, allowing your body to take you wherever it wants.

Step 3 – Pause from time to time to look more closely at a leaf or notice the sensation of the path beneath your feet.

Step 4 – Find a comfy spot to take a seat and listen to the sounds around you. See how the behavior of the birds and other animals changes when they become used to your presence.

Step 5 – If you go with others, make an agreement to resist talking until the end of the walk, when you can gather to share your experiences.

If you are unable to walk outside, you might sit by an open window and breathe in the air that has been purified by our tree neighbors. Spend some time in stillness and in gratitude for Earth, our Common Home, and for all creatures that inhabit this planet with us.

Please join us for our Evening of Prayer on Wednesday, April 14, when our EarthCARE committee will lead us in prayer for our Earth and for the environment.



ESL During the Pandemic

Like almost everything in our country, the ESL program closed in March 2020, and to date, we have not been able to return to the ESL Center at St. John Neumann Parish in South Scranton. We have stayed in touch with our students via frequent text messages and by letting them know where the Friends of the Poor Food Distributions would be each week. One of our teachers purchased Gerrity's gift cards for those students most in need of food, which we delivered to their homes.

In the fall, Sister Ann Bubser contacted us to let us know that some funds were available that could be used for the ESL program. Since classes at the Scranton schools have been virtual this year, the families with school-aged children have internet. Our ESL teachers were contacted to see if they were interested in opening a virtual ESL program for the spring semester. One of our lay teachers, Mary Ann Garvey, and Sisters Mary Martha Gardiner, Jacquelyn Donohue, Joan Quinn, Michael Marie Hartman, Kathy Kurdziel, and Eleace King agreed to teach. Knowing that we had sufficient teachers, we purchased 35 Lenovo Tablets with docking stations to be used by students and any teachers who needed them, as well as teaching materials for the teachers. We invited those students who were attending classes in March 2020 to participate in the virtual program; 23 students expressed interest.

During the months of December and early January, the teachers met on Google Meet to discuss the program and to learn how to set up meetings and invite their students. Since mid-January we have been teaching 15 classes.

Overall, the classes have been successful. The students have regained many of the skills they had lost during the 10-month hiatus, and some have begun to tackle new material. Some students who attended erratically in person, are attending more regularly, now that they can come to class from their own homes. This is especially true of those students who walk to class. We may continue to offer the option of virtual classes after we return to in-person classes.

Visiting the students' homes, even just meeting them at the front door to deliver the tablets, has allowed us to get to know our students more intimately. Meeting their families and seeing their homes has brought us closer together. Several students were disappointed when we declined a visit because of Covid. A number had made tea or coffee; one woman had made sesame rolls, which were still warm. When we are able to reopen the ESL Center, we hope to incorporate home visits into the program, so that we can enjoy the hospitality that they so generously extend.

ESL is in need of teachers. If you live in the Scranton area, and can spare an hour or two a week to help an immigrant brother or sister learn English, please consider joining our ESL family. The only criteria is that you speak English; you do not need to speak a foreign language, or have teaching experience. For more information, please call Sister Eleace King, IHM at kinge@sistersofihm.org or at 570-955-6550.



Mother Mary Lange

Almighty and Eternal God,
You granted Mother Mary Lange
extraordinary trust in Your
providence. You endowed her with
humility, courage, holiness and
an extraordinary sense of service
to the poor and sick. You enabled
her to found the Oblate Sisters of
Providence and provide educational,
social and spiritual ministry
especially to the African American
community. Mother Lange's love
for all enabled her to see Christ
in each person, and the pain of
prejudice and racial hatred never
blurred her vision.

Deign to raise her the highest honors
of the altar in order that, through her
intercession, more souls may come
to a deeper understanding and a
more fervent love of You.

Heavenly Father, glorify Your heart
by granting also this favor
(here mention your request)
which we ask through the
intercession of
Your faithful servant,
Mother Mary Lange.”

IHM Development Office

Spring Appeal Mailed

The spring direct mail appeal was sent to IHM friends, family, and donors during late-March. Our appeal seeks support of our IHM sisters through a donation and included a prayer intention card for supporters to return. Also included was a message from Sister Ellen Maroney, IHM. The appeal will soon be available for online viewing under the donate section of the IHM website.



Remain in our Love

The development office continues to offer special liturgies at the IHM Chapel for communities where we have ministered but are no longer present. Our next mass, on April 28, 2021 at 8:00 a.m. is for parishes, schools, and organizations from the Dioceses of Allentown, Altoona-Johnstown, Pittsburgh, and Harrisburg, PA; Cleveland, OH; Detroit and Grand Rapids, MI. Please provide any special intentions you may have to bubsera@sistersofihm.org



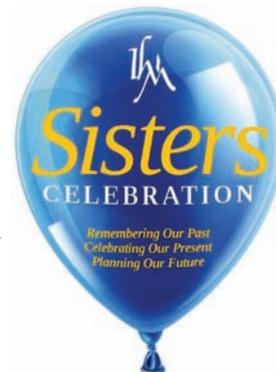
Silver Circle Seller's Lists

Over the past few weeks, Sister Kathleen Burns, IHM, and Krupa Patel have been working to compile Silver Circle seller's lists. Distribution of the lists has begun. If you received a list and have any revisions, please email Sister Kathleen Burns at skb@sistersofihm.org. The updates will be reflected on the final seller's lists that will be available this summer.

IHM Sisters Celebration

Each summer since 2014, the Sisters of IHM Foundation has hosted a dinner celebration in honor of the sisters which raised thousands of dollars in support of the IHM Retirement Fund. The Foundation is currently preparing for this year's event which is scheduled to begin at 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, August 7. Just as last year, this year's program will be conducted virtually and promises to be fun and engaging for everyone.

Honorary co-chairs are Bill and Bean Lynett. Mr. Lynett is publisher emeritus of The Scranton Times-Tribune. The following individuals are being featured for their benevolent work in the community and to highlight the impact the IHM sisters have had in their lives: Ann Montoro Williams, Stewardship Manager, Friends of the Poor, Scranton, PA; Maria Montoro Edwards, PhD, President and CEO, Maternal and Family Health Services, Wilkes-Barre, PA; Dan Santaniello, President and CEO, Fidelity Bank, Dunmore, PA; Carl Witkowski, Chief Operating Officer, Berkshire Hathaway Guard Insurance Companies, Wilkes-Barre, PA. These outstanding individuals were selected by the committee in recognition of their commitment to and embodiment of the IHM spirit and mission.



NEW ON THE IHM WEB

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities: <https://video.ibm.com/recorded/129628146>

Evening Prayer: <https://video.ibm.com/recorded/129543664>

Nuns and Nones Presentation to IHM Sisters and Associates: <https://video.ibm.com/recorded/129484294>

EWTN's Mother Maria Kaupas Story: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_gkiUyyunA&feature=youtu.be

IHM Motherhouse Animoto: <https://animoto.com/play/g6CJpHwFn80jzSnfbIo45Q>

Notes of Gratitude

Dear Sisters and Associates,
Thank you for the many prayers, cards, memorials, and masses received and offered in memory of my brother-in-law Dr. Doug Eller. My family deeply appreciates your love and concern.
Gratefully, Sister Nancy DeCesare, IHM

Sister Agnes Panik and the family of Verna Peslak wish to thank all those who offered expressions of sympathy, Mass cards, notes, and calls upon Verna's death. Your outpouring of love has been a great consolation to all of us.

Sister Sarah Ann Holmes and family wish to thank all the sisters for their support and kindness when our brother Michael died. Your Masses, prayers and cards were very comforting and appreciated.

The Caulson and Kellerman families thank each and every one of you for your kind words of sympathy. We know that it is the prayer of our sisters and others that has helped us on this journey. We miss Mary very much but know that she is in a much better place now. May God bless each of you for your support at this time. With gratitude and joy,
Sister Beatrice and family

Gratitude to all in the IHM community for the wonderful response to my sister Anna Callenbach's death. Sister Joel Marie Sheehe and family

The Gilvary family and I extend our deepest gratitude for your prayers and support at the loss of my sister Mary Gloria. We find great consolation in your many kindnesses and expressions of sympathy. Sister Catherine Ann and the Gilvary family

IHM Calendar

Wholeness Presentation
by Liz Sweeney, SSJ
April 10-11

Chapter Chat via Zoom
Wednesday, April 21
Session One: 1:30-3:30 pm
Session Two: 6:00-8:00 pm

Advisory Board
Saturday, June 5

IHM 175th Celebration
July 9-11

Visioning the Future
October 23-24
with Linda Buck, CSJ

IHM Forward
October 30

IHM Chapter
March 22-27, 2022
April 21-24, 2022

God's covenant has been fulfilled



Sister Anita Maleski, IHM
March 3, 2021
in the 55th year
of her religious profession



Sister Mary Frances Ambs, IHM
March 14, 2021
in the 68th year
of her religious profession



Sister M. Priscilla Koblarchik, IHM
March 23, 2021
in the 78th year
of her religious profession



The Carpenter: A Re-Telling of the Story of Joseph of Nazareth

by S.A. Wilson

Reviewed by Sister Patt Walsh, IHM

Kindle often sends title suggestions to me. Last month it suggested: *The Carpenter: A Re-Telling of the Story of Joseph of Nazareth*. Since it was March – the month/feast of St. Joseph – and this is also the year Pope Francis has dedicated to St. Joseph – I went with one of my favorite phrases “coincidence is God’s way of being anonymous.”

I liked the book but I was more fascinated by its imaginative possibilities when it comes to bible stories. My memory of Joseph’s story is about a paragraph of statements found strung throughout Jesus’ pre-birth to his first appearance in the Temple. Not much to go on for such a powerful figure in church history. But, using key events and repeated biblical figures, Wilson turns this one paragraph into a 200+ book.

As I read through this “re-telling,” I realized that not only does the rest of Joseph’s story give me the same potential to expand and add the details I think “could have happened”, but that much of the Bible is filled with such potential opportunities. In its own way, this book has many parallels to the scriptural practice of “lectio divina.”

Knowing the story of the Marriage at Cana, I thought about the wedding. At that time, Mary was “betrothed” to Joseph. According to tradition, Mary was somewhere between 12 – 14 years old. When Mary returned home, Joseph knew the child was not his, and that if he did not keep her confidence, she would be stoned. Joseph simply listened to Mary’s tale, accepted it and quickly prepared to leave Nazareth. Now... pause for a second... Mary tells you she hasn’t been unfaithful; she’s talked to an angel and she’s carrying the Son of God!

During this time, it’s approximately a 7 day walk. It’s also not an easy journey – between warring tribes and desert sands. According to the story we re-tell each year, Mary was just 7 days from her due date.

Magi do visit with Herod and tell him of their mission. Herod is not content to believe they will return and explain what they have discovered.

One element this story inserts that is not in other versions is a group of evil spirits known as the “Horde.” While I struggled, at first, with this element, I did recall the biblical stories of Jesus casting out “demons” so, apparently, such evil exists - but seems to only have power when it inhabits a human body. In this version, Herod sends a troop of ten of his soldiers to capture Mary and Joseph and this troop becomes the perfect human hosts for this Horde.

While I’m going to stop my “re-telling” here, I would confirm for you that Joseph and Mary’s journey now becomes a series of death-defying adventures. Mary rarely says anything and Joseph only says a brief prayer when he doesn’t see an outcome in which they survive. You do know where they are going and that they not only arrive but the baby is born. You need not know what challenges they face and survive – just that they obviously did. (It’s your re-telling’!) That’s just the point, knowing the terrain and that they are being followed by demons, what situations would you put them in?

More importantly, if you were Joseph and you endured so many challenges and, of course, such a miraculous birth, what would you begin to think about the story that Mary told you in the first place – angel... Son of God? How many other stories in Scripture could you “re-tell”?

